

B. Needs Of The Aging - The second target group study for the PIP was initiated in 2001 for the Aging target group. As of this writing, the report of the Tempe Task Force on Aging has been issued in draft form. A summary of their findings and recommendations appears below.



STAFF SUMMARY

Tempe Task Force on Aging Report - 10/20/02

The Task Force on Aging has spent the past several months studying aging issues and their possible impacts on Tempe. Of critical note is that the number of residents age fifty and older will be a much greater percentage of Tempe's population than in the past. This has far reaching implications for Tempe regarding housing, transportation, recreation, and aging services. The impact of these senior citizens to both the cultural and economic vitality of our city will be significant. To encourage focus and action around aging issues, the Task Force recommends that Tempe adopt a policy on aging that clearly demonstrates through words and deeds that our city values its aging population. Tempe can become a community that not only meets the immediate needs of its aging citizens, but also embraces the concepts of healthy aging in Tempe. A focus on aging citizens creates an opportunity for a new economic engine in our city. What better industry to promote than one that will encourage adults to live, work and play in Tempe? Below are the prioritized recommendations from each of the sub-committees of the Tempe Task Force on Aging:

Policy

Tempe will develop a long-range plan in support of aging citizens. Special emphasis should be placed on a centralized entity to monitor the progress of the plan. The Task Force recommends a commission, task force, board and/or employee. The specific/special needs of low-income and minority seniors should be incorporated into the long-range plan.

Information and Referral

Tempe's residents need to be better informed about existing senior services and how to access them. To provide a coordinated and centralized information and referral source for Tempe seniors, collaborations among existing programs need to be enhanced. These enhancements include:

- distributing materials/information (e.g. library, multi-generational centers, police, fire)
- creating a webpage with links to senior services
- publicizing senior resources through "Tempe Today" (e.g. Senior Help Line, health tips)
- conducting public information campaigns
- utilizing materials developed by aging experts (e.g. Area Agency on Aging)
- developing outreach programs for support services
- supporting the formation of "211" as a state-wide community services hotline

Housing

Tempe needs to encourage its residents to age in place in our community. To accomplish this, the provision of affordable, accessible housing for seniors should be facilitated. Some methods that should be considered are:

- advocating for the universal design concept
- forming partnerships with property owners in Tempe to use underutilized properties (e.g. schools, churches, commercial centers)
- improving easy and safe access to important senior destinations
- working with the Community Land Trust of Tempe
- promoting incentives to builders to develop a diverse range of senior housing
- providing property tax considerations for seniors

Tempe Task Force on Aging Report - continued

Intergenerational Education and Training

A healthy community requires the active involvement of citizens of all ages. To bring this about, intergenerational training should be offered through such means as:

- providing flexible senior center hours
- promoting life-long learning and employment
- providing additional senior issue classes (e.g. health, housing, fitness)
- fostering intergenerational programs
- emphasizing opportunities in the geriatric professions
- providing in-service training for city staff who interact with seniors
- promoting volunteer opportunities and volunteers

Transportation

Transportation for seniors extends across all senior issues, both in meeting basic needs and in supporting an independent and vitally healthy lifestyle. Transportation needs of seniors should be incorporated into all transportation planning and redesign, including:

- point-to-point transportation (e.g. Dial-A-Ride)
- voucher programs for seniors (e.g. Enabling Transportation)
- bus routes
- light rail

Health

Good health is a concern for everyone. Maintaining seniors' quality of life is essential for living independently and in their own homes. The following programs/services need to be expanded or enhanced to foster this:

- health promotion programs, including physical activities and information at senior centers
- non-medical emergency services (an alternative to 911)
- caregiver respite programs
- home health services (e.g. home delivered meals, personal care)
- senior services/centers located or expanded based on demographic changes

Maricopa Association of Governments - The City of Tempe and Tempe Community Council both participate in the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Human Services planning structure. MAG cited these as the priority problems for elderly in Maricopa County in their 1999/2000 Human Services Plan.

MAG PRIORITY PROBLEMS OF ELDERLY IN MARICOPA COUNTY – 1999/2000
#1 Increasing inability to provide for nutritional needs
#2 Premature institutionalization due to lack of community and home based services
#3 Transportation
#4 Difficulty meeting housing costs
#5 Information and help to access social and medical services
#6 Physical, emotional and financial abuse
#7 Limited behavioral health resources
#8 Inadequate community outreach
#9 Caregiver stress for family members
#10 Employment related problems (discrimination, need for retraining and support)
#11 Legal problems